Little Speller™

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The fun and easy way for young children to learn spelling.

A Product of
The Software Guild

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Apple® II with Applesoft, II+, IIe, or Franklin Ace™ 1000
48K • DOS 3.3 • One Disk Drive

PACKAGE CONTENTS

Little Speller Diskette
Instruction Booklet
Warranty Card

OVERVIEW

Little Speller is an interactive learning system for children in kindergarten through third grade. It helps them to build spelling skills, identify basic word groupings and link words to pictures. Little Speller also encourages young children to interact comfortably with the computer. Entertaining drawings and musical sound effects capture the child's interest. Because it is fun, your child will want to study with Little Speller!

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Little Speller Manual v.2
June 1983
Edited by The Software Guild, Inc.

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I. Preliminaries

Little Speller is for children in kindergarten through third grade. It is designed to help develop spelling and reading skills in an entertaining and lively manner—so that your child will want to learn. As with other programs in Softsmith's educational line, Little Speller allows the parent or teacher to tailor the program to the child's needs. This is done through the "Learning Manager," a part of the program that only the adult sees. You may choose between a Spelling Bee or a Reading Primer, as well as change the speed and difficulty of the lessons. When the program is run later, the child will find the pictures delightful and instructive.

Once you have seen how effectively Little Speller instructs your child, you will want to try other educational programs available from Softsmith. Consult your local Softsmith dealer for a catalog and a demonstration.

WARRANTY CARD

Please take a moment to complete and mail the enclosed Warranty Card. By having your name on file we will be able to provide better customer service, including information on program updates and replacement of damaged diskettes.

GETTING STARTED

To get started with Little Speller, simply follow these steps. (This is called "booting.")

1. Turn off the computer to clear the memory. Turn on the monitor.

2. Open the disk drive door by pulling out and up on its bottom edge. Slip the program diskette into drive #1 with the labeled edge being the last to enter the drive.

3. When the diskette is entirely in the drive, close the drive door.

4. Turn the power switch to the on position. You will hear a "beep" from the computer and the "in-use" light on the disk drive will come on. This means that the program is loading.

You will now see the Softsmith logo and Little Speller title appear on the screen. To enter the Learning Manager, press the <→> key immediately upon seeing the Little Speller title appear. Then follow the instructions in the Learning Manager section of this booklet.

IMPORTANT TIPS

In general, the child will need some help from an adult the first few times the program is used. Starting the program is very simple—the child should just put the diskette into the drive and turn on the computer. A variety of pictures will appear on the screen, and then a list of choices (called a "menu"). The child should press <1> at this time.

Adults may find that they can type faster than the computer can print letters, with the result that some letters never appear on the screen. This should not be a problem with young children.

About Children and Diskettes

It is strongly recommended that very young children not handle the program diskette without being closely observed the first time. The program diskette is indeed fragile and physical mishandling can easily cause damage. Instruct your child to handle the diskette only by the labeled edge.

Rules to Remember:

Do make sure the shift lock light is lit if running this program on the Franklin Ace. Little Speller recognizes only capital letters.

Do not press <CTRL-C> while the program is running. Results are unpredictable and damage to your program may result.

Do not open the disk drive door while the "in-use" light is on. This may damage your diskette and render it unusable.

Do not try to make a copy of this diskette. If during normal use something goes wrong with your diskette, please refer to the Troubleshooting section of this manual.

II. A Closer Look at Little Speller

While children will enjoy the pictures and sounds of Little Speller, adults will most appreciate the flexibility which the Learning Manager provides. This section describes various features of the Learning Manager, and how to set the program to suit the child's needs. In addition, it describes the two main learning units and how the child is to use them.

In the rest of this booklet, we will be referring to Spelling Bee and Reading Primer. These are the two main learning units of Little Speller, one for spelling and one for reading. Spelling Bee teaches spelling by drawing pictures and then asking for the name of the object drawn. Reading Primer draws three pictures and then displays a word. The child must choose which picture matches the word.

In addition to the two learning units, Little Speller also makes use of three "modes." These are the Demonstration Mode, the Drill Mode, and the Tutorial Mode. Demonstration Mode provides a demonstration of each of the lessons in Little Speller. Drill Mode runs drills just like the tests a teacher would give in class. Tutorial Mode teaches the names of objects by presenting an object and its name, erasing the name, and then asking the child to type the name again. Tutorial Mode can be used only with Spelling Bee.

To prepare to use Little Speller, you should first run the demonstrations of Spelling Bee and Reading Primer. Then you should enter the Learning Manager and learn how to use the various features. You will use the Learning Manager to set the program for your child to use. Finally, you should teach your child how to use the diskettes and run the program.

DEMONSTRATION MODE

When Little Speller first arrives, it is set to Demonstration Mode. This allows you to see exactly what the child will be learning. It behaves differently depending on whether the program is set to show the Spelling Bee or the Reading Primer.

If you haven't booted the program yet, do so now. Follow steps 1–4 in the "Getting Started" section of this booklet. Do not press the right arrow <→> key at this time.

After booting the system, a list of choices will appear on the screen. Pressing <0> will return you to Applesoft. If the program was set to show Reading Primer, pressing <1> will start the demonstration. You may wait for the demonstration to finish, or press <ESC> to end early. When the menu appears again, press <0> to go to Applesoft.

If the program was set to show Spelling Bee, pressing <1> will show you a different, very large menu. Most of these choices will show you different lessons of Spelling Bee. To see a demonstration of one, enter the number (it may be necessary to press <RETURN> afterwards). There are even more choices than you see—enter 23 to see the other half of the list or enter 24 to demonstrate all the lessons in order. Pressing <0> will return you to the Demonstration Menu.

To switch between the demonstrations of Spelling Bee and Reading Primer, you must enter the Learning Manager. Follow steps 1–4 in the section titled "Getting Started." Be sure to press the right arrow <→> key at the proper time. The menu will give you three choices:

<1> Select Program
<2> Change Learning Mode
<0> EXIT

If you would like to see the other part of the demonstration, press <1>. The words "Spelling Bee" and "Reading Primer" will be displayed on the screen. Press the number corresponding to the demonstration you wish to see, and then press <0>. Press <0> again if you are done making changes. Then press <1> to see the new demonstration, or press <0> another time to exit to Applesoft.

To use the Learning Manager to prepare the program for your child to use, you must switch from Demonstration Mode to another mode. Get to the menu above (you may need to boot the program again). Then press <2>, press <2> again to change from Demonstration Mode to Drill Mode, and then press <0>. Little Speller will now ask for information on a new child. Enter first and last names, then 2, 1, and 1, pressing <RETURN> after each as appropriate. (Don't worry about these settings for now. They will be explained later on, and you can change them at any time). After the final entry you will see the Learning Manager Main Menu.

THE LEARNING MANAGER

If you have followed the instructions above, you already know how to use over half of the Learning Manager! This section will fill in the gaps.

If the disk was not preset for Demonstration Mode, pressing the <→> key while "booting up" will lead you directly to the Learning Manager Menu. You are given five options:

<1> Select Program
<2> Change Learning Mode
<3> Add New Learner/Change Sequence
<4> Review Learner Files
<0> EXIT

Select Program and Change Learning Mode

The first two options should be familiar to you from the previous section. Option 1 lets you select either Spelling Bee or Reading Primer. Option 2 lets you select either Demonstration, Drill, or Tutorial Mode. (Note: Reading Primer does not have a tutorial mode, so if you have selected Reading Primer, this choice will not appear.)

If you choose Tutorial Mode, you will be asked to enter a delay time. The delay time determines how long the computer will show the child a word before asking for the correct spelling.

Add New Learner / Change Sequence

The next part, Option 3, should be familiar to you. When you change from Demonstration Mode to another mode, Little Speller has to prepare for a new learner. It does this by automatically entering this section of the program and asking the following series of questions.

First you will be asked for the child's first and last names. Answer each of these by typing the name and pressing <RETURN>.

The next question is ***TRIALS PER UNIT.*** This lets you adjust the program to suit the child's attention span. The program will display this number of questions from each lesson, chosen at random. Enter a number between 2 and 999. (Actually, 999 trials would be much too many!) You will need to press <RETURN> if the number is less than three digits long.

The next two questions you will be asked are the beginning and ending lessons for a session. There are slightly under twenty lessons, but they are not numbered consecutively. (Use the Demonstration Mode to see what the lessons are and what they contain.) Just enter each number, pressing <RETURN> afterwards if it is only one digit long.

After you answer all the questions in Option 3, you will return to the Learning Manager Menu automatically.

Review Learner Files

Option 4 enables you to review the child's progress. If the child has not used the program, or if you just used Option 3 to reset the program for a new child, pressing <4> will simply blank the screen a moment and then return you to the Learning Manager Menu.

If the child has used the program, you will see a screen with three boxes on it. The number of the lesson you are looking at will appear in the box in the upper right-hand corner. When you first enter, this number should be the "starting unit" you had previously chosen. Below it is more information on the child's performance, and which units the child completed of those you had selected.

On the left is a box containing the words of the unit currently on display. You will also see whether the child got each word right or wrong.

On the lower right is a box containing a list of options. Pressing <1> will show the next unit, up to the last unit the child completed (then it will show the first unit again). Pressing <2> will show you more words in the current unit. (Many units have thirty to forty words, which obviously won't fit in the one box at left.) Pressing <0> returns you to the Learning Manager Menu.

EXIT

This is the final option of the Learning Manager Menu. Pressing this option will give you a choice between <1> (running the program just as the child will see it) and <0> (exiting to Applesoft). If you run the program, press <ESC> to exit before finishing the lesson or the computer will record the lesson as having been taken!

HOW THE CHILD USES LITTLE SPELLER

After the program has been preset by an adult (see the Demonstration Mode and Learning Manager sections of this booklet), Little Speller is ready for the child to use. The child just follows steps 1–4 in the "Getting Started" section. If all has gone well, a menu will appear on the screen. The child should press <1> to start the program. The child may stop the program at any time by pressing <ESC> when the computer is waiting for an answer. The child may continue where he or she left off by pressing <1> when the menu appears.

Little Speller has two parts, Spelling Bee and Reading Primer. Reading Primer may only be run in Drill Mode. Spelling Bee may be run in either Drill Mode or Tutorial Mode. Tutorial Mode presents the answers to a question first, then erases the answers and asks the question again. Drill Mode just asks the question.

Reading Primer

Reading Primer displays three pictures and a word on the screen. The child is to choose which picture goes with the word. He or she does this by pressing the <SPACE BAR>. The first press makes a checkmark appear in the top box. Successive presses move it to different boxes. The child should press <RETURN> when the checkmark is in the right box. If the answer is correct, music will play. If not, an obnoxious buzzer sounds.

Spelling Bee

Spelling Bee draws a single large picture and then asks the child to spell its name. Tutorial Mode presents the name first, waits a certain amount of time, then erases it and prints an arrow to indicate that it is waiting for an answer. The purpose of this is to identify just what it is that the picture represents. Drill Mode just prints the arrow and waits for the child's answer.

In Drill Mode, the child may use the letter keys, the left arrow <←> key, and the <RETURN> key. When the arrow appears, the child types in the name of the object, using left arrow <←> to backspace as necessary. When finished, the child should press <RETURN>. The computer will either play a tune or make an obnoxious noise depending on whether the answer was correct or not. Then it will go on to the next picture.

In Tutorial Mode, the child uses only the letter keys. After the correct answer has been displayed and erased, the child types it back as best as he or she can remember. Pressing the wrong key will buzz a buzzer, but will not print the letter on the screen. When the word has been correctly spelled, the computer will play a tune and go on to the next picture. If the child makes too many mistakes, the word will be spelled on the screen one more time, and then the next picture will be presented.

When all lessons are finished, the original menu will appear. The child should type <0> to stop, turn off the computer, and put the diskette away.

III. Troubleshooting

A great deal of effort has gone into preparing this program to operate smoothly and without "bugs." Given normal use, it should provide you with many hours of consistent operation. However, should you have problems with the program, please follow these steps:

1. If the program never starts or dies soon after starting:
   - Check the instructions on how to start the program. Try them again, following all steps exactly.
   - Check to see that you have the disk in the correct disk drive.
   - Make sure that you have all the equipment necessary to run this program, and that it is properly connected. See the front page of this document for a list of necessary equipment.
   - Make sure your disk drive is working properly. Try another disk that you know to be good. If it does not start properly, stop the computer immediately and disconnect the drive. Do not use the drive again until it has been checked or it may damage other disks.

2. If your disk becomes damaged:
   - Given normal use, it should not be possible to damage your disk. However, if the disk or program on it does become damaged, please return it to us with a short description of the problem. The Software Guild, Inc., will replace your disk promptly, according to warranty provisions.

3. If you have other problems:
   - Please contact our Customer Service Department at the following toll free number. We have the experience and service network to assist you.

The Software Guild, Inc.
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2935 Whipple Road
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